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BOOK REVIEWS



BOOKS TO READ ALOUD

WHEN the days of convalescence begin, and the patient, ceasing to be a "case," becomes once more a human being and demands something to read, it is often difficult to suggest the right thing.

The most charming and frivolous binding in these days often contains problems so depressing, or adventures so exciting, that even a normal man or woman becomes too absorbed and interested to sleep.

The writer will not soon forget the consternation felt on finding that a book of short stories, just pleasantly pensive, had reduced the invalid friend to whom it was given to tears and sleeplessness!

Of a quite cheerful sort is a small book, "Subject to Vanity," by Margaret Benson, published by Dodd, Mead & Co. These short stories of bird and animal pets are not only delightful in themselves, but they recall a host of charming suggestions and memories of one's own pets. Children and "grown-ups" both will love the birds, dogs, guinea-pigs, and other pets whose little vanities, comedies, and tragedies fill the pages.

"The Cardinal's Snuff-Box," by Henry Harland, is preëminently a book to be read from title-page to finis, and surely no convalescent could fail to find keen enjoyment in coming back to the world of real men and women by way of such delightful people as those between the red covers of the book.

It is difficult to put into words its charm; though the perfectly-chosen vocabulary is not the least part. The Italian landscape, the people, the sun-lit mountains and storm-swept garden, all are put in with a perfect "touch," as a painter would say, and with such mastery as a pianist must have over the individual notes with which he sweeps the keys into a perfect harmony.

As for the story itself, it is enough to say that its wit, its gayety, and the tenderness of its romance make it absolutely a joy, and we realize that the world is not thoroughly given over to "problems" and depression, since such books are still written.

A new book, reprinted in part from published articles, is Howells's "Heroines of Fiction." In this he reviews with a broad and sympathetic touch so many of the characters we've all read, loved, and half-forgotten—Hester Prynne, Maggie Tulliver, Lily Dale, to name only a few—that many of us will not only read the book for its own sake, but will be grateful to the writer for recalling to us in these strenuous days the heroines we loved even before we knew enough of life to appreciate them.

L. D. D.

FOUR EPOCHS OF A WOMAN'S LIFE: A STUDY IN HYGIENE. By Anna M. Galbraith, M.D. With an introductory note by John H. Musser, M.D. W. B. Saunders & Co.

Dr. Galbraith's book may be welcomed as an encouraging assurance (if such be needed) of the beneficent use to society of the woman physician. Even were it admitted that every branch of medical science is sufficiently filled by medical

men, yet, as intimate and unreserved teachers, counsellors, educators of the great public of women and young people in matters of deepest privacy and requiring the utmost delicacy and seriousness, there is a vast field which never has and never will be cultivated until women physicians undertake the task. For as women they can face life-problems as but few men are willing to face them, and as physicians they can speak with an authority not possessed by others.

Dr. Galbraith's book is prepared in this spirit and for the instruction of this untaught public. She says in her introduction, "The masses of women have at last awakened to a sense of the awful penalties which they have paid for their ignorance of all those laws of nature which govern their physical being, and to feel keenly the necessity for instruction at least in the fundamental principles which underlie the various epochs of their lives."

She then proceeds to treat of the various stages of physical and sexual development, not alone from the stand-point of anatomy and physiology, but from the highest point of education, ethics, and public duty as well.

A most refreshing tone of good sense is noticed throughout her pages. The beneficial results of mental and intellectual occupation upon the bodily health of girls are plainly shown. The real reasons for emotional hyperæsthesia in child and woman are clearly explained.

The time-honored theories which exaggerated the physical disabilities of woman are bid depart, "as the beginning of the twentieth century may see the emancipation of the woman from the thralldom" of her uterine organs, as with enlightened hygiene these assume their true proportion in relation to mind and muscle. The ethics of marriage are most simply yet fearlessly stated. The highest duty of the mother is not simply to reproduce the species, but to control reproduction, and to insure the mental and physical vigor of the children she brings into the world. The decadence of life and questions of practical hygiene are all dealt with. The one criticism we would make is, that the chapters on the menopause are too technically expressed to be understood by the average woman of the laity, and as this admirable book is intended for lay instruction, a simplification of the language here and in the following chapter would make it even more helpful.

BOOKS RECEIVED

WE acknowledge with thanks several volumes received from medical publishers: "A Pocket Cyclopedia of Medicine and Surgery," compiled by George M. Gould, M.D., and Walter L. Pyle, M.D., and published by P. Blakiston's Son & Co., a very concise and valuable pocket reference-book; two volumes of the "Practical Lessons in Nursing Series," published by J. B. Lippincott Company; "The Nursing and Care of the Nervous and Insane," by Charles K. Mills, M.D., and "Maternity; Infancy; Childhood," by John M. Keating, M.D. These excellent text-books are already widely known and are usually found in the training-school library. They are most useful and practical. Miss Stoney's "Practical Points in Nursing for Private Practice," and her "Materia Medica for Nurses," published by W. B. Saunders & Co., complete the list. Miss Stoney's books are also widely and favorably known among nurses, who fully appreciate them and recognize her industry and interest in their behalf, too soon terminated by an untimely death.